


in search
of a
confident
F A I T H

OVERCOMING BARRIERS
TO TRUSTING IN GOD

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PREFACE

Faith has a public relations problem. It has a hollow ring to it, and it's associated with a lot of really bad, harmful ideas. It no longer carries the rich and deep connotation one finds in the Bible, and very few people know what it really means. Interestingly and sometimes sadly, words change their meaning over time. *Large* used to mean, well, large! Now if you want a large meal, you have to ask for it to be super-sized! If you say *large* you will be misunderstood, and if you want people to understand the meaning of *large* as it used to be understood, you must select a new word.

This shift in the meaning of *large* is amusing, but the change in the meaning of other words, such as *love* or *marriage*, is no laughing matter. The same must be said for *faith*. In fact, in this book, we shall discuss this change in the meaning of *faith*, and, while the word is still biblical, we will suggest in the pages to follow that we should use the term *God-confidence* to convey the biblical meaning of *faith* more often than using *faith* itself. We do not want to completely set aside the word *faith*. But the really important thing for Christians is to recapture and promote the biblical meaning of *faith*, not the word itself, so we shall suggest that *God-confidence* be used regularly when *faith* is meant in speech or writing.

We shall also show why Christians should speak in the public arena by employing cognitive and not simply faith language when referring to Christianity. We ought to talk about the *knowledge* of God—about the Bible as a source of *knowledge* of God, values and wisdom—and not merely say we believe in the Bible or have faith in God. If we call Christianity “the faith” or say “our faith says such and such about abortion,” we communicate to non-Christians that they must accept Christian ideas by a blind exercise of pure will, stepping into the dark. Rather we should insist that such acceptance is a choice to trust what we can have grounds or reason for trusting, and knowledge of what we trust to be true.

But our book is not merely an exposition of the real essence of biblical faith, as important as that is. We go further and explain why there is such an arrangement—a need for faith between us and God—in the first place. We explain in precise and practical detail exactly how to assess the strength of one’s confidence in God and his truth, and show how to develop a plan to assure with God’s help a life of steady growth in God-confidence. There is great need today for bringing clarity to these issues, and our passion and burden are to do just that in the pages to follow. Christians and non-Christians alike misunderstand what faith is—we don’t know how to develop it and lack the tools to assess its strength in our daily lives. By God’s mercy, we hope to provide help here that is biblically faithful and practically powerful.

One more thing has been in the center of our attention as we wrote this book: we have attempted to write in such a way that your confident trust in God and his truth will grow *in the very reading of the book*. In the pages to follow, we hope to give you ideas that you can ponder and apply to your life and ministry. But we also want the very act of reading the book to be a means of increasing your confidence. If we have been successful, then you should find your confidence in God growing as you read.

Oh, there's one more thing that may encourage you. We have placed our own confidence in God to be with our readers in such a way that he strengthens their trust beyond what can be explained by simply reading and applying the ideas to follow. And as you will see, we have good grounds for thinking that God is answering our prayers.

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